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ABSTRACT

Concerned with the growing utilization of part-time community college faculty and their isolation from full-time faculty and institutional support, an inter-disciplinary team of community college and university faculty investigated current part-time faculty development efforts. Five models emerged, including "benign neglect", a workshop approach, the use of regular faculty as a resource, the development of communication lines, and a complex model. Concentrating on the complex model, the team outlined the process steps as follows: gain administrative and financial support, establish direct communication lines between part- and full-time faculty, and develop a resource book, workshops, and a lead instructor system. They recommend that the resource book be developed by a college to meet its specific college, departmental, and course needs, and that it serve as the basis of a comprehensive faculty development system. A possible book outline is presented in three parts: (1) the history, philosophy, and routine of the college and department; (2) methods and materials directly related to specific course content; and (3) modes of evaluating instruction. The outline would be of value to anyone seeking to develop a comprehensive faculty development system for part-time faculty.

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ACCENTUATING THE PROFESSIONAL ROLE OF PART-TIME FACULTY

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Abstract

Most community colleges extensively utilize part-time faculty. Among the problems these colleges must address is that of accentuating and supporting the professional roles of their personnel. An interdisciplinary team of community college and university faculty have developed a resource book to aid community colleges. This book can serve as the basis for a comprehensive faculty development system. The nature of this development system varies with the specific needs of the institution. However, the essential elements of any faculty development process are herein described.

The National Conference on Part-time Instructors in the Community College, February 7 - 9, 1977 in Dallas, Texas, brought together educators from 29 states, Canada and Mexico. The conference focused on current issues and future challenges associated with the role of the part-time instructor.

UTILIZATION OF PART-TIME INSTRUCTORS

Part-time staff or adjunct instructors are important to the financial well-being of the community college. In addition, they provide:

1. Flexibility - enabling the colleges to respond to enrollment fluctuations.
2. Special expertise - enabling schools to offer up-to-date skills training in occupational areas and special emphasis in other fields.
3. New Programs - enabling the colleges, particularly the occupational areas, to develop new programs.

The level of utilization is indicated by these statistics supplied by the California Community College System:

-- 27,000 part-time community college instructors in California

— Of the 70 California Community College districts, 69 have more part-time faculty than full-time individuals

— Part-time faculty teach 40% of California's teaching load and receive 20% of the remuneration associated with instruction

— Approximately one-third of the part-time faculty have been employed in their districts for less than 2 years

Leslie Koltai, the Chancellor of the Los Angeles Community College District, indicated at the conference that the higher education utilization of part-time staff is not limited to the United States. French, Italian and British representatives to a conference of educators in Belgium voiced concern with the increased use of part-time staff in their countries.

The situation is not confined to community colleges. For example, approximately 50% of faculty at San Diego State University are part-time. The range in departments is 11% - 100%.

THE PROBLEM

While statistics document the utilization of part-time instructors, they don't describe the problem. Dr. Koltai indicated that the problem is one of professionalism in education. Some full-time contract instructors in his district view their teaching roles as part-time. They hold jobs as real estate brokers, travel agents, accountants, etc. At the same time, many part-time instructors work full time at teaching. For the institutions, the problem evolves into one of accentuating and supporting the professional role of all faculty members.

Many colleges do not contribute to the growth and development of their staff. The feeling of the part-time faculty member in these schools can be described as a feeling of anomie - and, in some cases, angry isolation. The bottom line is the effect this neglect has on the school's instructional functions.

A SOLUTION

Our personal view is that all instructors must be encouraged to participate in the broad range of school activities. They must be encouraged to: share in decisions associated with their courses; evaluate and improve their teaching skills; and to communicate their needs and share their ideas regarding the activities of the community college. When all faculty and staff are encouraged to participate and are rewarded for their contributions, then they will have a greater awareness of their professional roles.

To assist San Diego County Community College faculty in their quest for professionalism, an interdisciplinary team of San Diego State University (SDSU) and community college personnel participated in a project funded by a San Diego State Presidential Mini-Grant.

The initial stage of the project involved an investigation of current faculty development efforts. These efforts may be classified as follows:

(1) The Benign Neglect Model for Faculty Development. Many colleges subscribe to this model for their part-time staff. This model involves giving the faculty member the title of the class, time and location of the class meetings. At this point, the school severs the umbilical cord and the part-time faculty member is on his or her own. San Diego State University utilizes this model in most departments. The strength of this approach is that, at least, there is limited harmful intervention.

(2) The Workshop Model. The workshop approach to faculty development consists of periodic offerings of classes, workshops or meetings. The emphasis of the sessions may be upon instructional methods and materials, course content related items and/or topics of general interest to community college personnel. The major benefits of this approach are professional growth (increased knowledge, abilities) and provision of a vehicle for communication among diverse groups. Maricopa County Community College District in Arizona has had a good deal of success with this approach. (N.B. - The examples given with Models 2 - 4 indicate successful attempts and do not indicate that this model is the only one employed at the schools named).

(3) Faculty Resource Model. As in Model 1, the resource involves a somewhat passive stance on the college's part. A hand-out is prepared specifically for part-time faculty and a separate item for full-time staff. This paper resource is given to the faculty member to use as he or she sees fit. The resource should contain information on emergency procedures, community relations, administrative roles and functions, business and non-instructional details, personnel procedures, student rights and responsibilities and instruction related tasks. These resources can be valuable aids for the new faculty member. In addition, they can serve as a useful reference for the more experienced staff.

Delta College District in Michigan and El Camino College District in California produce excellent examples of these resources.

(4) The Communication Model. Many schools have encouraged communication among part-time faculty and their full-time counterparts. At the National Conference on Part-time Faculty, Dallas Community Colleges in Texas presented the concept of the lead instructor. Part-time faculty appreciate the opportunity to exchange ideas and materials with other staff who teach the same subject. In addition, this communication system provides information on the inner-working and hidden mechanisms of the department and college. The lead instructor usually shares office accomodations with the adjunct faculty member.

(5) The Complex Model. This model is emerging in most community colleges. It incorporates the positive elements of all of the aforementioned approaches to staff development. The success of this model demands that it be designed for the needs of the

specific college in which the model is to be utilized.

THE BASIS OF THE MODEL: A FACULTY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE

The intent of the SDSU project was to assist colleges with their efforts to design and utilize a complex faculty development system. The initial focus of the project was to prepare a resource book which the college could use as guide to support the survival needs of their faculty. In addition, this resource would serve as a basis for the process of developing the complex support system.

RESOURCE DESCRIPTION

A Unique Attempt - The resource is unique in that it is directed toward the needs of specific colleges, departments, and courses. The focus is upon providing immediate, practical assistance to faculty members.

The resource book consists of three parts:

I. History, Philosophy and Routine of the College and Department:

   A. History of the Community College Movement.

   B. Philosophy of the community college, goals and functions of the faculty member's college.

   C. Organization of the college:

      1. Functions and relationships of key personnel.
      2. Routine of the Department:
         a. Requirements for attendance, census days, absence, etc.
         b. Grading policies
         c. Availability of counseling, health services, other student personnel services
         d. Access to typing and duplicating services
         e. Services of the Learning Resource Center
         f. Requirements for faculty evaluations

II. Methods and Materials Directly Related to Specific Course Content Item:

(N.B. - A and B are provisions for immediate help for the instructor. C is designed to long-term assistance in teaching techniques).

A. A comprehensive list of the course content items. The method of instruction (i.e. lecture problem solving, competency-based instruction, etc.) preferred by full-time instructors is listed with the items.

B. A list of these items rated by the full-time faculty as most important. Includes basic resources associated with the items, as follows:

1. Sample lesson plans, statements of student objectives, lecture outlines.
2. Sample examination questions including a rating of their difficulty for community college students.
3. References to films, texts and other materials, where appropriate.

C. Guide to improving instruction:

1. Improvement of lecturing techniques
2. Tips on utilization of media
3. Development of competency-based instruction

III. Evaluating Instruction

A. Description of how the college and departments evaluate part-time faculty (includes samples of observation forms).

B. Self-Evaluation:

1. Student feedback
2. Interaction analysis

DEVELOPING THE COMPLEX SUPPORT SYSTEM

The process of accentuating and supporting the professional roles of the faculty requires the approval, support and cooperation of administration and faculty members. The spectres of financial constraints, collective bargaining, litigation and legislation associated with part-time roles, and, in some cases, contractions in enrollments may hinder the development of a comprehensive faculty support system. In any event, some positive steps should be taken to establish the development process.

The process should begin with some evidence of administrative approval and support. A formal statement and minor financial support to participating

departments should suffice. At the same time, the faculty must be consulted and involved. (Faculty development is not imposed upon faculty - it involves them to the fullest extent practicable.)

This faculty consultation and involvement requires established lines of communication. Surveys of faculty needs and interests can provide some exchange of ideas. However, the SDSU team's experience indicates that the face-to-face contact of part-time and full-time staff is a most effective means of communicating ideas and soliciting cooperation. (We recommend a department level meeting which focuses upon the process of communicating and results in preliminary design and commitment to selected elements of the faculty development process. Details and a recommended agenda for this process oriented meeting are available from the authors.)

Once the lines of communication have been established the faculty should be encouraged to commit themselves to selected professional growth activities. These activities should include:

(1) Development of a resource book (similar to the one herein described). The core of this book should be developed at the college level with special instructions, evaluations and course descriptions developed at the department level.

(2) Development of workshops to fit the surveyed needs of the faculty. The workshops should provide growth opportunities in both subject matter and methods of instruction.

(3) Development of the lead instructor system.

Effective comprehensive faculty support system demands the attention and coordination offered by a college or district level position. For example, Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland, Ohio has established the Director of Instruction and Instructional Personnel Development. The

essential role of this individual is to accentuate and support the professional role of all faculty. This school has demonstrated an interest in and capacity for the development of a comprehensive support system based, to some degree, on the model we have described.

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